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AUTHOR Carter, Linda P.
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ABSTRACT

A study explored the relationship between personal narratives and their contexts by developing an analytical framework and applying it to the personal narratives told by guests on "The Tonight Show" and "Late Night with David Letterman." Three episodes of each program, containing a total of 22 personal narratives, were videotaped. Transcripts of these interviews included the dialogue of the guest and the host immediately prior to, and immediately after, the telling of the personal narrative. The analytical framework included the structure, function, and criteria for tellability of the personal narratives as well as the setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key (of tone), instrumentalities (forms of speech), norms, and genre of the show. Results indicate that the teller, the purpose for telling, and the type of story told are a reflection of the physical setting and psychological scene, the participants in the situation, the key of the situation, the use of instrumentalities, the norms of interaction and interpretation for the situation, and the specific genre. The narratives also aid in constituting and maintaining these contextual features. The analytical framework used was an effective methodological instrument for identifying the relationship between narratives and context. (Sample personal narratives and relevant tables are appended.) (SRT)

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THE NARRATIVES OF GUESTS ON LATE NIGHT TELEVISION TALK SHOWS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL NARRATIVES AND CONTEXT

Linda P. Carter
Department of Speech Communication
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98195

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between personal narratives and their context by developing an analytical framework and applying it to the personal narratives told by guests on The Tonight Show and Late Night with David Letterman. The results indicate that narratives not only reflect their context, but that they help to constitute their context as well.

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The telling of a personal narrative, a story which relates an experience in which the narrator plays an integral part, occurs in many everyday situations. More importantly, the meaning and effect of a personal narrative is intricately tied to the context of its telling.

Many authors have noted this "situated" dimension of narratives. For example, Cutbirth and Metts (1985), in discussing Metts' rules of narration, note that a narrative should be comprehensible and appropriate to the social setting. Similarly, Robinson (1981) states, "Personal narratives are situated communications: they occur in distinguishable contexts of interaction ... The situated character of speech exerts important constraints on the content and form of personal narratives" (p. 58).

Studies to date on personal narratives identify their occurrence in a variety of contexts, such as the late night gatherings of young males (Leary, 1977), criminal trials (Bennett, 1978), dinner with friends (Mandelbaum, 1985) and organizational settings (Martin, Feldman, Hatch and Sitkin, 1983; Kelly, 1985; Brown, 1985).

The question which arises, then, is what the relationship is between narratives and context. More specifically, what is it about a context which affects or determines the narratives which are told, and what is it about the narratives told which affect or help to constitute or shape a context?

The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between personal narratives and their contexts by presenting an analytical framework and applying it to the personal

narratives told in the context of late night television talk shows. By using this context as an example of one in which personal narratives are an expected communicative act, it is believed that the viability of the analytical framework can be demonstrated, and implications for similar analysis of other contexts can be shown. More basically, it is believed that, as a result of this analysis, a better understanding of the relationship between personal narratives and context will be developed.

Late Night Television Talk Shows

The two programs selected for analysis in this study are The Tonight Show and Late Night with David Letterman. They represent the latest in a trend of programs whose goal it is to entertain audiences through "celebrity" guest interviews and performances. This type of program, hosted by such individuals as Steve Allen, Merv Griffin and Dick Cavett, has been a mainstay of television since its inception.

As to the reason for the popularity of this type of program, Borgers (1960) notes that people will generally give attention to a broadcast if it entertains them, that is, if they undergo an experience that is satisfying in itself. This satisfaction can come from ingredients such as surprise, appeal-to-curiosity, humor, and shock, as well as the sound and spectacle of music. All of these ingredients are components of the late night television talk show.

The interaction on a talk show is an interesting blend of interview and conversation. The host and guest are engaged

in an interview, which, as Wolfson (1976) notes, is a specific type of speech event. In an interview, the rule of interaction is that one of the participants has the unilateral right to ask questions and the other is obligated to answer them. Wolfson states that, in an interview event, free conversation is not expected, and that an attempt on the part of the interviewer to break out of the question/answer format in order to elicit spontaneous conversation, and specifically, to elicit narratives, will be generally unsuccessful. In most interview settings this is true, yet on talk shows, the rule of interaction seems to be that interviewees, in response to questions from the interviewer, can and should recount "conversational" personal narratives.

Yet a talk show is not a pure conversation, as that speech event is defined by Donaldson (1979). She notes that, in a conversation, neither speaker should be seen in a role of authority, based upon any predictable, expected or formulaic exchange. Using this conceptualization, an interviewer and interviewee do not "converse". Another characteristic of conversation, to Donaldson, is the reciprocity that occurs among participants. If there is a role differentiation in the interchange, then there may not be a chance for equal involvement. In an interview, the amount and type of involvement or contribution to the interaction will be dependent on the roles of interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer is not expected to answer questions or tell

stories, nor is the interviewee expected to ask questions. This lack of reciprocity, according to Donaldson's conceptualization, would indicate that a talk show is not a purely conversational speech event.

How, then, can a talk show be classified? The best response, it seems, is to indicate that a talk show is a hybrid form of interview and conversation, where the participants have distinctive roles (such as guest, host, announcer, band leader, audience member) which govern the amount and type of interaction, but do not restrict the interaction to the limited rules of a formal interview setting.

The rules for the type of contribution made by guests seem to follow what Britton (1970) calls the spectator mode of language use. In the spectator mode, language is a vehicle for reflection upon knowledge and experience. The qualitative features of talk exemplify speculation, appreciation and entertainment. Information and experiences are presented as exploits and amusements. In the spectator mode, sociability is foregrounded, in that individuals take pleasure in the encounter. Britton regards narration as the primary cognitive-linguistic resource for organizing, expressing and using prior knowledge and experience.

In a talk show, then, the focus of the exchange is a spectator mode of conversation, in which guests talk and tell stories in response to the questions of hosts. The purpose of the speech event, and total speech situation, is to entertain through this talk, as well as through the actual

performances of some of the guests, specifically musicians and singers.

Analytical Framework

The framework to be used in analyzing the relationship between narratives and their context is derived from two sources of literature. The literature on the structural components, the functions, and the criteria for tellability of personal narratives provides the framework for analysis of the actual narratives. The framework for analysis of these narratives within their context comes from the work of Dell Hymes.

Research into personal narratives to date has identified three important aspects which can be used in describing and analyzing narratives told in everyday settings. As noted, these three aspects are the structural components of personal narratives, the functions of personal narratives, and their criteria for tellability.

As to the structural components, Labov and Waletzky (1967), Labov (1972) and Van Dijk (1975) have identified six structural components of personal narratives. These components are the abstract, the orientation or exposition, the complicating action, the resolution, the evaluation, and the coda or moral.

An abstract is a summary of the whole story and the "point" of the story. An orientation or exposition provides background material, such as persons, place, time and the behavioral situation involved in the story. The main body of a narrative is usually a series of events, called the

complicating action. This is followed with the story's resolution. The evaluation states fully the "point" of the story, that is, the meaning or significance of the event being recounted, and the reason that the story was told. The coda closes off the narrative by returning the verbal perspective from the recalled events to the present moment. One way a coda can be accomplished is by stating a moral, which is a statement about what future actions should be taken in similar circumstances.

As to the functions of personal narratives, that is, the purposes served by their telling, the literature to date identifies several different functions.

Labov and Waletzky (1967) state that conversational narratives serve a referential and an evaluative function. A narrator fulfills the referential function when he recapitulates an experience in narrative units which match the temporal sequence of an event (when he refers to a sequence of events). A narrator fulfills the evaluative function when he rells the reason for the story, tells the import and sigificance of the event.

According to Van Dijk (1975) conversational narratives have the practical functions of being advisory, of being incitive, or of giving warning. Brady (1980) identifies the function of narratives as creating and helping to maintain "face".

Robinson (1980) notes that experiences which are puzzling or ambiguous may be recounted with the intention of

seeking clarification of an episode or event. He states that the telling of narratives in this situation serves a heuristic function. Lastly, Deetz (1983) states that stories function to socialize and legitimize. In socializing, narratives instruct about what things mean, how to behave and how to understand others. In legitimizing, narratives function to make sense out of deviations from expectations, by explaining or justifying incongruities in the social order.

In summation, the functions served by personal narratives identified to date are referential, evaluative, advisory, incitive, warning, creating and maintaining face, heuristic, socializing and legitimizing.

The third aspect of this part of the framework is the criteria for tellability of personal narratives. The criteria for tellability relates to what makes a good story, what kinds of events are worth recounting in narratives. The three basic criteria outlined in the literature to date are remarkable events, commonplace events, and experiences of victimization.

The criterion of "remarkableness" was presented by Van Dijk (1975). He states that an event is remarkable, and thus worth telling about, if the actions performed by the narrator are difficult, if the initial situation is a predicament, if the event is unexpected, or if the event is unusual.

Labov and Waletzky (1967) concur that events are tellable if they are about unusual or strange things, and Labov (1972) emphasizes this point by noting that, if an event no longer has that unusual or strange character, if it

becomes common enough, then it is no longer reportable or tellable.

Robinson (1981) agrees that remarkable stories make good stories, but states that this criterion does not account for all personal narratives. Commonplace activities are also tellable or reportable, specifically with an audience who is unfamiliar with the sphere of life to be discussed, or in a relationship with is long standing or intimate.

A third criterion for tellability, as identified by Robinson (1981), is the recounting of experience of victimization, such as criminal assault or sexual harassment. These events may be recounted in peer groups, or other relational situations.

Thus, in analyzing the narratives, the framework used with focus on their structural components, their functions, and their criteria for tellability. The framework to be used to analyze the narratives within their context was developed by Hymes (1972). He presents a heuristic scheme to be used in the descriptive analysis of speech communities. A speech community is defined as a community which shares rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety.

Within a speech community there will be many speech situations, These are contexts for the manifestation of activities. Within speech situations there will be one or more speech events, which are activities or aspects of activities that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech. Within speech events there will be one

or more speech acts. For the purpose of this study, the speech act under consideration is the telling of a personal narrative by a guest.

Hymes further presents a scheme which outlines the components of speech acts open to analysis. These are the setting, the participants, the ends, the act sequence, the key, the instrumentalities, the norms and the genre.

The setting is the time and place of the speech act, the physical circumstances and the psychological scene, which is the level of formality or seriousness.

The participants are the speakers, addressors, receivers and addressees engaged in the speech act. The ends are the purposes of the speech act, that is, the outcomes or goals.

The act sequences are the form and context of the message, that is, how things are said and what is said. The key is the tone, manner or spirit in which the act is done. It may be mocking or serious, perfunctory or painstaking, for example.

The instrumentalities are the channels and forms of speech. The channels can be oral, written, telegraphic or other medium, and the forms of speech are the language and dialects, codes, and varieties and registers utilized.

The norms are both the norms of interaction and the norms of interpretation. The norms of interaction are the specific behaviors and proprieties attached to speaking. The norms of interpretation involve how the behaviors are interpreted by the participants.

The genre refers to categories such as poem, myth, tale and lecture. Genre involves identifying certain speech acts according to formal characteristics which are traditionally recognized.

Combining the framework on narratives (structure, functions, criteria for tellability) and the Hymesian framework (setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, genre), analysis can be made of the personal narratives told by guests on two late night television talk shows, The Tonight Show and Late Night with David Letterman.

Methodology

A sample of the two late night television talk shows needed to be obtained, so that analysis could be made of the personal narratives told by guests, and the relationship of these narratives to the context. It was determined that obtaining six episodes of the programs would be adequate to begin with. There was no prior determination made of which episodes would be selected (based upon a guest list or any other criterion). The episodes included in this study were The Tonight Show (NBC, 11:30 pm to 12:30 am) and Late Night with David Letterman (NBC, 12:30 am to 1:30 am) for October 24, 1985, November 4, 1985, and November 19, 1985.

Each episode was videotaped and from these videotapes the personal narratives told by guests were identified. Each personal narrative was audiotaped and transcribed. A total of twenty-two (22) personal narratives were identified and

transcribed. To obtain relevant information about the context, the transcripts also included the dialogue of the guest and host immediately prior to, and immediately after, the telling of the personal narrative. In addition, for the purpose of identifying fully the contextual factors, transcripts were made of the complete program for two of the episodes.

Each narrative transcript was then coded, based upon the components of the analytical frameowrk. The transcripts of the full episodes were used to code for such contextual aspects as setting and key.

Results

The analysis of personal narratives told by guests on late night television talk shows indicates that there is a strong and identifiable relationship between narratives and context, and that aspects of that relationship can be revealed through the use of this analytical framework.

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The results will be discussed by describing and explaining each of the components of the framework, as seen in this context.

The physical setting of the late night television talk show consists basically of a desk for the host, chairs for the guests, a band area, a stage area for performances and an area for a studio audience. These physical characteristics have become familiar aspects of talk show programs, leading to an expectation by participants of what will take place in such a setting.

The time of the broadcast, late at night, has an effect on the psychological scene. The audience that the program is intended for is adults, and the level of formality is one of relaxed entertainment. Telling jokes, telling stories, doing comedic skits, having singers and musicians perform, all evokes a scene of informal fun and pleasure.

As to the participants, Table 1 is a summary of the guests on each program. Generally, the guests were actors, comedians, singers and musicians. However, not all of the participants engaged in dialogue with the host. Several performed, but did not "sit down" and have an interview.

The question which arises, at this point, is why these individuals act as guests on this type of program, and more specifically, why they tell stories of personal experiences. Cazden and Hymes (1978) present a discussion of story-telling rights which helps to explain who tells stories in this type of context. Their discussion, while

focusing on another societal institution, that of schools, has a connection to this context as well. They note that the stratification of our society favors the telling of some stories over others, because of the position of the teller. This differential distribution in a society may be a clue to the distribution of other things as well, such as rights and privileges having to do with power and money.

They state that fame can be defined as the case in which a larger, non-professional circle knows some of the names and is interested in some of the stories of the professionals. This, it seems, describes accurately the role of guests and audience on talk shows. The famous have the right to come on the show and tell their stories to the non-famous. As Hymes states, "The right to think and express thought in narrative comes to be taken as a privilege ... so that the right to unite position and personal experience in public is a badge of status and rank" (p. 29).

An example of this storytelling right can be seen in the personal narrative told by the comedian Joe Piscopo. He related a story about an experience he had with Eddie Murphy and Stevie Wonder. It was worth telling and listening to not only because it was a humorous event, but also because of who he is and who he had the experience with. Most viewers, surely, had never had a humorous experience, or any experience, involving famous people like Piscopo, Murphy or Wonder. Thus, he had a right to be on the show and to tell the story, because of his status.

The ends or purposes for telling the personal narratives can be described by identifying their functions. As was noted, the functions of narratives are their purposes, the reasons they are told. This coincides with Hymes' notion of the purpose of a speech act.

Analysis of the personal narratives told on these programs indicates that their functions were to socialize, to legitimize, and to create and maintain face. Table 2 provides a synopsis of the reason that each personal narrative was told, that is, the point the narrator was trying to make, and an identification of the function of each narrative, based upon the analytical framework.

An example of a personal narrative told to socialize is the story told by the actress Susanne Pleshette. In socializing, according to Deetz (1983), narratives instruct people as to what things means, how to behave, and how to understand others. This narrative serves the socializing function by explaining that a working actress, when on location, doesn't get time to see any of the sites. The narrative was told as follows:

SP: You know, we go on location, and I always think, we go to these interesting places in the world, and afterwards, well we'll stay a few days, and I'll see Paris or I'll see New Orleans, but by then my husband has had it, because we've been gone four months or three months or six weeks ... He's seen everything, he says, okay, let's go home now, so I really don't ever know where I am when I'm there, I mean, they pick me up in a motor home and spit me out at four-thirty in the morning...

JC: And you go do a scene...

SP: We shot in Washington, and I never saw any of it, and I really have always wanted to spend private time in Washington, not working there, but ...

JC: So all the glamorous life sometimes that people think happen doesn't happen, you're out working.

Her purpose for telling the personal narrative is to socialize, to have others understand what actors and actresses do, how they work and how, as Johnny Carson stated, what people think happens (to an actress) doesn't happen.

An example of a personal narrative which was told to legitimize is the story told by Dizzy Gillespie. In legitimizing, as described by Deetz (1983), narratives make sense out of deviations from expectations. In this context, stories which legitimize are told about unexpected events which, in general, the narrator handled in a humorous way. In Dizzy Gillespie's story, he describes how he handled an unexpected situation with an airport official, as follows:

JC: We keep running into each other at airports.
DG: Yeah, that's right.
JC: Yeah, last time, you're luggage hadn't showed up, or something.
DG: Yeah, that happens all the time.
JC: What do you do, you always carry this on the plane, right, the horn?
DG: Yes sir. One time, in Germany, I went through, and I had three bags. In Germany, one bag. So I said, well let me speak to the boss. So they didn't know who the boss was, but I asked them to get somebody, so they got this guy. So he says, he came out, he says, that. He patted this. I say, yeah, that's my instrument. He say, open it. So I open it up, and he says, ah, tv, tv. I was on German tv. So he says, you play that, huh? I say, yeah. He say, play it. So I said ...
JC: You're standing in the airport, playing ...
DG: I picked it up, and I say (plays the horn). I say, that'll be three thousand dollars.
JC: Cabaret tax ... As a cover ... Of course, there's a cover in airports.

Through this narrative, the musician explains that things don't always occur as expected, and explains how he

handled an incongruity in the social order.

A third type of function found in these personal narratives was stories told to create and help maintain face. As Brady (1980) describes this function, a narrator reveals him/herself to be brave, intelligent or daring in his or her encounters. While none of the narratives told by guests involved great risk or highly dangerous adventures, several of the stories showed the narrator to be clever or more intelligent than the antagonist, thus creating and maintaining face for the narrator.

An example of such a story is the personal narrative told by the actor and comedian Buddy Hackett. It was told as follows:

BH: I was at the Concorde, you know, a couple of weeks ago, and a guy says to me, my father was at your bris. Now I was eight days old, so what do you say to a guy when he says that? So I said, what was his name? He said, Aaron Firestone. I said, no, he wasn't there. Unless my Aunt Clara brought him, and we didn't talk to her part of the family. And ...
JC: He really meant it?
BH: Yeah, he meant it. His father...
JC: Like you would know.

It is important to note that all of the personal narratives told in this collection fulfilled the functions outlined by Labov and Waletzky (1967), in that they were referential and evaluative. They all referred to a series of past events and stated a point or reason for their telling. However, these narratives did not serve any of the other functions identified in the literature to date, that is, they were not advisory, incitive or warning, nor were they heuristic.

The question, then, is why the personal narratives told in this context served the functions of socializing, legitimizing, and creating and maintaining face. Polanyi's (1979) discussion about the "point" of narratives seems to present a useful rationale for the findings of this study. She notes that what is interesting (what makes a good point or reason for telling a story) is culturally, socially and personally determined.

> Stories based on culturally interesting material will be of interest to those who participate fully in a given culture and share its values, beliefs and world view. Socially interesting material has a more limited appeal- it could be thought of as having the same relationship to the culturally interesting material as a dialect has to the overall language. Socially interesting material may not be of interest to people from social, ethnic, racial, sexual or professional background different from that of the narrator. Personally interesting material has the narrowest appeal of all and may be compared to an idiolect in its relationship to the dominant culture. In speaking of material which has in the past proved to be of interest only to himself, a narrator is taking a serious risk of being misunderstood, disliked or socially ostracized (p. 211).

The guests, fully aware that they are speaking to a large and diverse audience, select stories which are culturally socializing or legitimizing, or which reinforce

their societal face. When speaking to peer groups or in more intimate settings, these individuals would select stories whose points were more socially or personally interesting, such as advising other peers about certain jobs or warning about certain individuals in their profession. But this type of story is inappropriate for the larger forum of television talk shows.

The act sequence of the personal narratives, that is, what is said and how it is said, can be described through the components of the structural features of narratives, and the criteria for tellability.

As noted, the six structural components of personal narratives are abstract, orientation, complication, resolution, evaluation and coda. Appendix 1 provides two examples of the narratives collected in this study, along with a coding of their structural components. It is interesting to note how the host, in his role as interviewer, will introduce the topic of the narrative, and, in some cases, provide an abstract or an evaluative statement about the point of the story. The participants are able to identify a narrative as a narrative because it includes these structural components, because of the form of the message.

As to the content of the message, the analytical framework provides for three types of personal narratives, based on their criterion for tellability. Events are tellable or reportable because they are about remarkable events (unexpected events, unusual events, predicaments, etc),

they are about commonplace events, or are about experiences of victimization. Analysis of the narratives told in this context reveals that the majority meet the criterion of remarkableness. Table 3 provides a summary of these findings.

It is important to note that a few of the narratives did not seem to fit this criterion. These were events which were commonplace activities to the narrator, but were unfamiliar, out of the "sphere of life", as Robinson (1981) terms it, of the audience members. For example, Garland Bunting, a federal revenue agent who goes after backwoods moonshiners, told about what he had to do to avoid being spotted as a lawman. His narrative went as follows:

GB: I do anything in the world to make them think that I'm not a lawman. You know, a lawman won't go out and talk trash, you know, like ...
DL: So if you behave goofy, they'll just forget about you?
GB: Right, they'll say, we'll he's off. Like one time I went into a still, I said, if there ain't no rootin' and tootin', there won't be no cuttin' and shootin'. The fellow said, wait a minute, this fella's too cool, he'll kill you now.
DL: Now what does that mean, if there ain't no rootin' and tootin', there won't be no cuttin' and shootin'?
GB: Well that means, if you behave yourself, I won't hurt you, you see what I mean.

In this way, these narrators obtain and hold the audience's attention by telling about events which are remarkable in some way, or which will be remarkable to an audience unfamiliar with the events and world told about.

There is a strong relationship between the key of the speech situation and the key of the speech act. On these programs, the key of a nonserious entertaining situation is established immediately, by use of music and the host's opening monologue. This key is maintained throughout by use of comedic skits or routines, such as the Carson Art Players or audience participation skits like "Brush with Greatness". Appendix 2 contains an outline of the format of the programs, identifying each of these aspects of the show. When guests engage in an interview/conversation with the host, there is no doubt that the dialogue, and specifically the personal narrative, should be of a humorous and engaging nature. The telling of these stories, thus, not only reflects the key of the context, but also aids in maintaining and constituting the key of the context.

The instrumentalities are the channels and forms of speech utilized. Being of the same speech community, no extended discussion of language or dialect need be engaged in, except to say that a mutually intelligible form of speech was utilized by the participants.

As to the channels, the participants, based upon their role in the context (host, guest, audience member, etc) had different modes of use of the oral channel. Hosts and guests can speak, yet audience members are restricted in what they may do. As Atkinson (1984) notes, audiences are for the most part confined to the production of gross displays of affiliation (such as applause, cheers and laughter) or disaffiliation (such

as boos, jeers and heckles). This audience reaction can be a powerful factor in the context, and especially in the telling of personal narratives by guests. If a narrative is successful, that is, it is told competently (has a followable structure, appropriate function and criterion for tellability), then an audience's reaction will indicate this competence and appropriateness- they will laugh, cheer and applaud. If, however, a crucial component is missing or inappropriate, the audience's silence or negative reaction can register their sanction of the poor narrator.

The norms of interaction for the telling of personal narratives are, in this context, as in most storytelling contexts, that the normal turn taking sequence will be suspended and one individual will take several turns at speaking, until the story is completed. The other participant(s) will not interrupt, except to make an appropriate addition, such as a point of clarification.

As noted, what is somewhat unique about stories told in this context is the norm that the host, through a statement or question, introduces the topic of the narrative. In normal conversation, the narrator has an equal right to select the topic, but in an interview context, the interviewer's role allows for an unequal right to select the topic.

The norm of interpretation for this speech act in this speech situation is that the act will be interpreted by the participants as the telling of a personal narrative by a famous or noteworthy person. In a sense, because the

person
is a guest on the show and is engaged in an interview with the host, the audience is expected to interpret this individual's knowledge and experience as worth attending to. The guest will oblige this expectation by providing narratives which are entertaining and worth attending to.

As to genre, it could be said that, in this context, the speech act itself, the personal narrative, is the genre. Yet a more distinct classification can be made. As developed in these results, the type of personal narrative told on late night television talk shows might be called entertaining personal narratives or humorous personal narratives. These can be classified as distinct from serious personal narratives. In a courtroom, for example, serious personal narratives are expected to be told. That type of personal narrative would not be expected or appropriate in this talk show context. Thus, the speech act may be identified as a personal narrative, and the genre is that of entertaining or humorous personal narratives.

Conclusion

Based upon an analysis of personal narratives told by guests on late night television talk shows, important aspects of the relationship between narratives and contexts can be identified.

Who tells the stories, the purposes for telling stories, and the types of stories told are a reflection of the physical setting and psychological scene, the participants in the situation, the key of the situation, the use

of instrumentalities, the norms of interaction and interpretation for the situation, and the specific genre.

Yet, not only are the aspects of narratives a reflection of the contextual features, the narratives aid in constituting and maintaining these contextual features.

To say that a famous actor tells a socializing story about a predicament on The Tonight Show can say as much about how that narrative is appropriate to the context, as how that narrative works to maintain the consistent expectations that people have about that context.

It is shown, by this study, that people can, over time, come to have expectations not only about what will occur in a context and what is appropriate to a context, but also what constitutes a context, what the characteristic or component parts of a context come to be. Without these constitutive parts, participants may fail to recognize or accept the definition of a context or a situation. The telling of certain types of personal narratives by certain individuals, in essence, provides a vital clue to participants (in this instance, television viewers) about what this context is, what it is about, what is going on, and why. The role of narratives is not only to reflect the context, but to help constitute it.

It has been shown that the analytical framework, developed out of the extant literature on personal narratives and Hymes' descriptive scheme, is an effective methodological instrument for identifying the relationship between narratives and context. This framework would be viable to use in other

studies of personal narratives and their contexts, and the comparisons and contrasts developed would prove useful in understanding the role of narratives in communication.

As stated in the introduction, the "situated" dimension of narratives is an important aspect deserving of analysis and attention. Through the development and application of an analytical framework on a specific narrative context, a better understanding of the relationship between narratives and contexts now exists.

Appendix 1

Example of personal narratives told -coding of structural components

Narrative #21 (told by Grace Jones)

		Structural components
JC:	Last time you were, you were heading for France last time you were here, or...	
GJ:	Yeah, I was, I was in France and I was in London.	
JC:	Tell me about France, do you like France?	
GJ:	Oh, it was great, it was great, actually, it's like my second home, cause I, I spend quite a lot of time there modeling, you know, and uh, I was there doing this Oscar de la Mode thing, and I was there with this really tight dress and I was supposed to sign in the opera, La Viarose, which was Edith Piaf's uh song, which was a very big hit for me, and I did my fitting at four o'clock in the morning, and I realized the dress was so tight that I would not be able to walk up the, the opera stairs, especially in ten seconds. I said no way, forget it, I'm gonna fall, I'm gonna break my ass, I'm gonna make a big fool of myself, you know, so luckily, Dolph was with me ...	Orientation Complicating action Evaluation
JC:	That's your, your uh...	
GJ:	My fiance...	
JC:	Your fiance ...	
GJ:	And, um, I said honey, I think you're gonna hafta carry me up these stairs, there's no way I'm gonna make it, and he just whisked me up like a feather, and everyone went Waaaaa, it was no...	Evaluation Resolution
JC:	He just carried you up.	
GJ:	Yeah, he carried me up the opera stairs, and stood me up there like...	
JC:	Yeah, now was this, was this this thing, no the other thing was in London, wasn't it ... (conversation/interview continues)	

Appendix 1 (continued)

Narrative #20 (told by Bill Marx about father Groucho Marx)

BM:	He was an ardent golfer, and he would play golf, he would play to a twelve to fourteen handicap no matter what, but he would always experiment.	Evaluation
	He was the first person I ever knew that ever putted a la shooting pool, he would ... also, he was the first person I ever knew that played eighteen holes of golf nude.	Abstract
DL:	Now where did this take place?	
BM:	In Palm Springs, when most people left during the summer. He was a sun worshipper, and so I went out with him one day on a golf court, and he'd hit a golf ball, and then he'd run over and jump in a neighbor's pool that was adjacent to the fairway, take a dip, jump back in the golf cart, we'd go to the ball, the next... he played eighteen holds of golf that way.	Orientation Complicating action Resolution
DL:	Absolutely nude.	
BM:	Absolutely.	
DL:	And of course, the obvious question, where did he keep the tees.	Coda
BM:	Shall I tell you?	

Appendix 2

Format of programs

Tonight Show (10/24/85):	Introduction of host
	Host's monologue
	Preview of guests
	Commercials
	Comedic skit
	Commercials
	Comedic bit with audience
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Interview with second guest
	Commercials
	Interview with second guest
	Performance of third guest
	Interview with third guest
	Commercials
	Closing
Late Night (10/24/85):	Introduction of host
	Host's monologue
	Comedic bit
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Comedic skit
	Commercials
	Interview with second guest
	Commercials
	Performance of third guest
	Commercials
	Closing

Appendix 2 (continued)

Tonight Show (11/4/85):	Introduction of host
	Host's monologue
	Commercials
	Comedic bit
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Performance of second guest
	COmmercials
	Interview with third guest
	Commercials
	Closing
Late Night (11/4/85):	Introduction of host
	Host's monologue
	Comedic bit with audience
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Comedic bit
	Commercials
	Interview with second guest
	Commercials
	Performance of third guest
	Interview with third guest
	Commercials
	Closing

Appendix 2 (continued)

Tonight Show (11/19/85):	Introduction of host
	Host's monologue
	Commercials
	Comedic bit
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Performance of second guest
	Commercials
	Performance of third guest
	Commercials
	Interview with third guest
	Closing
Late Night (11/19/85)	Introduction of host
	Host's monologue
	Comedic skit
	Commercials
	Comedic bit
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Interview with first guest
	Commercials
	Comedic bit
	Commercials
	Interview with second guest
	Commercials
	Interview with third guest
	Comedic bit
	Commercials
	Closing

Table 1

Guests and type of involvement/interaction on programs

Episode	Guest	Involvement
Tonight Show (10/24/85)	Susanne Pleshette (actress)	Interview- told Narratives #1-4
	Joe Piscopo (comedian)	Interview- told Narrative #5
	Dizzy Gillespie (musician)	Performance and interview- told Narrative #6
Late Night (10/24/85)	Sandra Bernhard (actress/singer/ comedian)	Interview- told Narratives #7-8
	Garland Hunting (author)	Interview- told Narratives #8-10
	J.J. Wall (comedian)	Performance only
Tonight Show (11/4/85)	Buddy Hackett (actor/comedian)	Interview- told Narratives #11-15
	Toni Tenille (singer)	Performance only
	Teresa Gancell (actress)	Interview- told Narrative #16
Late Night (11/4/85)	Susan St. James (actress)	Interview- told Narratives #17-18
	Bill Marx (author)	Interview- told Narratives #19-20
	Jimmy Cliff (singer)	Performance and Interview- told no personal narratives
Tonight Show (11/19/85)	Grace Jones (model/actress)	Interview- told Narrative #21
	Pete Barbutti (musician/comedian)	Performance only
	John McLaughlin (musician)	Performance and Interview- told no personal narratives

Table 1 (continued)

Episode	Guest	Involvement
Late Night (11/14/85)	Jay Leno (comedian/actor)	Interview- told no personal narratives
	Edward Woodward (actor)	Interview- told Narrative #22
	Judy Herbkersman (farmer)	Interview- told no personal narratives (also performed- brought pigs who ran a pig race)

Table 2

Personal narratives told: point of story and function of story

	Point of story	Function
#1	To explain that a working actor, when on location, doesn't get time to see the sites	Socialization
#2	To explain how actress was discovered and reacted to first job	Legitimation
#3	To describe reaction to meeting famous actor	Socialization
#4	To explain why actress is not competitive	Legitimation
#5	To describe how a friend can put you in an embarassing situation	Legitimation
#6	To describe how he got the upper hand on an airport official	Legitimation
#7	To describe the process of shopping for a new car	Socialization
#8	To describe how unsanitary moonshiners can be	Socialization
#9	To explain why he has to act "goofy" in his job	Legitimation
#10	To describe the dangers of his first assignment	Creating/ maintaining face
#11	To describe how he fights with his wife	Legitimation
#12	To explain how he handled a stupid person	Creating/ maintaining face
#13	To describe how for a fan can push him	Creating/ maintaining face
#14	To describe his early jobs	Socialization
#15	To explain about the early days in show business	Socialization
#16	To describe how fans reacted to actress	Creating/ maintaining face

Table 2 (continued)

	Point of story	Function
#17	To describe the poor seats she got at concert	Legitimation
#18	To explain how actress toured with band	Creating/ maintaining face
#19	To explain how his father helped him out of a dilemma	Creating/ maintaining face
#20	To describe father's eccentric behavior	Legitimation
#21	To explain how her fiance helped her out of a predicament	Creating/ maintaining face
#22	To illustrate how he can make up lines when he goes dry	Creating/ maintaining face

Table 1

Personal narratives told- criterion for tellability

#1	Unexpected event
#2	Unexpected event
#3	Unexp-cted event
#4	Commonplace event to narrator/unfamiliar to audience
#5	Predicament
#6	Unexpected event
#7	Commonplace event to narrator and audience
#8	Unexpected event
#9	Commonplace event to narrator/unfamiliar to audience
#10	Predicament
#11	Commonplace event to narrator/unfamiliar to audience
#12	Unexpected event
#13	Unexpected event/Predicament
#14	Commonplace event to narrator/unfamiliar to audience
#15	Unexpected event
#16	Unexpected event
#17	Unexpected event
#18	Unusual event
#19	Commonplace event to narrator/unfamiliar to audience
#20	Unusual event
#21	Predicament
#22	Predicament

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